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DOMESTIC COLLECTION DIVISION
Foreign Intelligence Information Report
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STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES
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REPORT CLASS

COUNTRY

USSR

DATE DISR.

9 May 1982

SUBJECT

The Forced Labor Without Confinement Program in the USSR and Other
Aspects of the Penal System
(DOI: 1965-1977)

SOURCE

1. The forced labor without confinement program in the USSR was commonly known in Russian as "stranika narodnogo khozyaystva" or SNKh, or in English "building of the national economy." It involved individuals who had been sentenced for up to three years for minor crimes (hooliganism, black marketeering, stealing up to 2,500 rubles) and was limited to first offenders. Such prisoners were sent to enterprises where it was difficult to get labor or where the work was physically dangerous. This practice was more frequent in times of labor shortage or when it was necessary to get extra workers to meet production deadlines.

2. The SNKh system was administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), which decided where such laborers were to be sent. Once sentenced, prisoners were conveyed under guard to assigned areas, where they lived in barracks. SNKh laborers had to observe a curfew and register periodically with the MVD office in charge of their respective work areas. Comment: Many such prisoners were used in the Odessa area, where cheap labor was needed for housing construction. Initially prisoners under the SNKh program were sent to locations near their homes, but in the early 1970's the regulations were changed and prisoners were sent to distant areas. Comment: Source could not estimate the total number of SNKh prisoners, although he was sure it was very large; he had never personally visited a SNKh camp.)

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Approved for Release
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MAR 1997

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3. An independent judiciary simply did not exist. Instead, judges were frequently pressured directly by local party and KGB officials to impose certain sentences on certain offenders. In the absence of such pressure, judges almost always handed down the sentence requested by the prosecutor. Only a few sentences were ever reduced on appeal. Many judges took bribes, especially during the 1960's.

4. Most crimes were committed out of economic need. Pilferage by employees in food-related industries was virtually constant, either for their own needs or to obtain goods for private barter. Crimes committed under the influence of alcohol were also a staggering problem, and there has been a steady increase in narcotics-related crime, particularly among the young. (Comment: Heroin and hashish were even available in the labor camps, smuggled in by relatives or bribed guards. Narcotics offenses also frequently involved political workers.)

REPORT CLASS

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